

TOURISM DIVISION



Three Affiliated Tribes Chairman Tex Hall speaks to the crowd at Monticello.

Commemoration kickoff

The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial commemoration kicked off January 18, at the home of Thomas Jefferson in Monticello, Va. More than 50 delegates from North Dakota participated in the week of Lewis and Clark events that took place at Jefferson's home and the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

"We expect more people to travel to North Dakota because of the bicentennial events," Department of Commerce Tourism Division Director Sara Otte Coleman said. "It's not only the time to

commemorate, but also the time for us to tell the North Dakota story. We can use the interest in the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial as a platform to get more people to travel here. The state has great historic sites along the Lewis & Clark Trail and unique culture that can only be experienced in North Dakota."

Tourism Division is working to ensure travelers experience the same warm hospitality Lewis and Clark

More on MONTICELLO, Page 2

Coleman takes the reigns



Tourism notes

Brochure distribution

Sixteen convention and visitors bureaus and chambers of commerce, as well as 27 tourism businesses and organizations, have submitted agreements for partnership and participation in the brochure distribution program hosted by the Department of Transportation and the Tourism Division of the Department of Commerce. If you have any questions about this program, please contact Mark Zimmerman at 701-328-2509.

Winter activities

North Dakota Tourism has been promoting winter activities on several radio call-in and talk shows in the past several weeks. From ice fishing to downhill and cross-country skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, birding, and a host of other activities, there is plenty to do in North Dakota in the winter! Plans call for this office to continue the effort throughout the next several months. If your community has a winter outdoor activity to promote, please provide the information and we will make every effort to get the word out across the region.

New Tourism director has been on the move since taking position

Sara Otte Coleman hasn't slowed down for a minute since taking over as director of the North Dakota Department of Commerce Tourism Division on January 16.

Coleman, selected by Gov. John Hoeven to replace Alan Stenehjem – who resigned in November – came aboard just in time for the legislative session. Nevertheless, Coleman was undaunted.

"I'm ready," Coleman said. "I really feel confident."

Coleman's confidence comes from a background in many of the programs already in place in the Tourism Division. She has worked in the field of group travel, international marketing and the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. The Bismarck native was with the Bismarck-Mandan CVB for more than 15 years, having started her career as a sales rep in 1987.

Coleman emerged as the Governor's choice after a search that attracted 51 candidates for the position.

"We engaged in a wide-ranging and thoughtful process with industry professionals from across the state in order to find the very



Sara Otte Coleman comes to Tourism after a lengthy tenure with the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau.

best candidate for North Dakota," Hoeven said. "Sara brings a broad perspective, a great track record and statewide support to the job of marketing North Dakota effectively to the nation and the world."

Coleman's selection pleased tourism officials from across the state.

"Sara has both the passion and the experience to lead the tourism industry in North Dakota," said Cole Carley, a search committee member and executive director of the Fargo-Moorhead CVB. "She is full of the energy and dedication that many people in tourism have, but she also possesses a wealth of knowledge about marketing in general and marketing tourism in particular."

"... She'll be a great addition to tourism in North Dakota," added Charles Jeske, a

More on COLEMAN, Page 2

Monticello

FROM PAGE 1

received from American Indians 200 years ago, said Coleman.

The Tourism Division and the Three Affiliated Tribes had booths at the commemoration, and Three Affiliated Tribes Tourism Director Amy Mossett and Three Affiliated Tribes Chairman Tex Hall spoke at the opening ceremony.

"In Monticello, North Dakotans represented our state to spread the word on our important impact on the expedition," Coleman said. "Here is where they met Sakakawea, and the explorers' journey would not have been possible without her tremendous contributions during their long and perilous journey."

Two of the next 14 Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Signature Events will take place in North Dakota: one in Bismarck on Oct. 22-31, 2004; and one in New Town on Aug. 17-20, 2006. To gather momentum for the events, the Tourism Division invited national media to an event in Virginia focusing on North Dakota's vibrant culture.

"Governor John Hoeven and Tex Hall spoke about North Dakota's role in the expedition, and the White Shield/Mandaree Singers, Keith Bear (flutist) and Amy Mossett (Sakakawea interpreter) were featured during the event. Teamwork helped make the event a success. The media event was well received by attending media," said Rachel Retterath, Tourism's Lewis & Clark coordinator.

Coleman

FROM PAGE 1

committee member and manager of the Alerus Center in Grand Forks.

Coleman said it's important that the Tourism Division sell the entire state of North Dakota. "I have been in the trenches selling North Dakota, the entire state," she said. "We have an opportunity to make a difference in every corner of the state by increasing tourism. I plan to facilitate the team sales approach. By cross selling we will all benefit through increased visitation and length-of-stay."

Coleman hopes to continue building momentum through the communications process. "We want to keep the communications lines open so that our industry partners are in the loop. We want to make sure that everyone knows our plan of action. The plan's bottom line: increasing the dollars spent by visitors to North Dakota. Plain and simple, showing a big return on our marketing investment."

Ropin' in Reiseliv

What many North Dakotans take for granted, the people of Norway took to heart at the Reiseliv International Travel/Trade Show in Oslo, Norway.

Visitors to the largest travel/trade show in Norway warmed to the idea of life in the West by hopping on a horse (a saddled sawhorse) and roping a steer (another sawhorse with horns). It was one of the more popular attractions during the show, which attracted approximately 40,000 people.

North Dakota's eight-person delegation made it the largest booth in the USA Pavilion. It was the state's second show in partnership with Minnesota as part of the *Nordic America Alliance*. *Nordic America* is the name of the alliance devoted to increasing travelers from Scandinavia to North Dakota and Minnesota. Coordinating the Nordic Alliance is Rocky Mountain International, North Dakota's international tourism promotion partner. By using our joint marketing efforts cost-effectively, we are doing a better job attracting international travelers to this area and are extending both states' reach into the international market.

Marcia Slag, international marketing director for the Tourism Division, was pleased with the outcome of the show. "North Dakota received a lot of media attention during the show, which sparked an interest in consumers and tour operators to visit our booth and find out more about our state," Slag said. "The private sector was also thrilled with the results and expect to see business generated as early as this summer."

Publicity North Dakota received at Reiseliv 2003:

- North Dakota product listed in all major tour operator's catalogs in Norway, that sell USA product.
- An article was written on North Dakota in two issues of *Aftenposten*, Norway's largest newspaper. *Aftenposten* (325,000 distribution and 1.3 million readers). In addition to that, approximately 25,000 copies of the



Travel agent Geir Jordfald tries roping in the North Dakota booth at the Reiseliv travel show in Oslo, Norway.

travel insert were distributed at Reiseliv.

- FlyAway Tours, the largest tour operator in Norway of U.S. product, dropped all U.S. working ranch vacations in their catalog EXCEPT for North Dakota's working ranches.
- The Nordic America Alliance between Minnesota and North Dakota was covered in *Dagbladet*. *Dagbladet* (193,300 circulation) is Norway's second-largest newspaper.
- *Scandinavian Boarding*, a publication specifically for trade (90,000 circulation), had an article on North Dakota prior to Reiseliv.
- *Standby* (25,000 circulation) featured North Dakota in their January issue.
- *Sone 2*, a nightly news show on Channel 2 in Norway, featured the Nordic America booth area and North Dakota's roping bull activity during the show. *Sone 2* is Norway's largest TV network and averages 100,000 viewers a night. The 4-minute segment was also featured on their website for one week, which averages 1,000,000 page visits per day.

Itineraries set for 'Two Nation Tours'

North Dakota, along with South Dakota, Minnesota, and Manitoba, Canada, has developed eight itineraries for the "Two Nation Tours" partnership, to promote the multi-state/province vacations. The itineraries will be included in a notebook and will go out to approximately 150 tour operators. The partnership is in the process of developing a familiarization tour intended for the domestic travel and tour industry.

The NTA (National Tourism Association) conference was held in November. In attendance were: Joanne Olson, North Dakota

Tourism; Sylvia Garcia and Bryan Schulz, Fargo-Moorhead CVB; Sheryl Persons and Deb Berggren, Tharaldson Lodging; Sheri Grossman and Sara Otte Coleman, Bismarck-Mandan CVB; Marion Houn, Fort Abraham Lincoln Foundation; and Wade Westin, Theodore Roosevelt-Medora Foundation. Requested follow-up packets of information have been sent out.

American Bus Association has selected the Norsk Hostfest as a "Top 100 Event in 2003" in North America. Congratulations to Hostfest planners on their hard work and dedication.